

A Workshop Series for People with Disabilities

PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS

Workshop IV, Session 7:

Supervisory Skills II:

Self-Awareness,
Self-Management,
and Constructive Feedback

Listening Blocks

Listening is the most important communication skill. A lot of the time people look or act like they are listening, but their minds are busy with other thoughts besides what the person is saying.

We can become more aware of when we are not fully listening if we notice the behaviors or thoughts that distract us from real listening. Being aware of *blocks to listening* makes it possible to turn them off or use them less often. Ten common blocks to listening are listed below.

1. Rehearsing

I can't really listen because I'm practicing what I'm going to say next. I may look like I'm listening, but my mind is going a mile a minute because I've got a story to tell or a point to make.

Mona, I'm sorry, but I need to talk to you about my schedule. I have to see if I can start 30 minutes late on Tuesday so that I can make a doctor's appointment.

Oh no! She's going to want to cut back her hours! What will I say? Should I let her know how awful this is for me? Should I be understanding?!





2. Filtering

When I filter, I listen to some things and not to others. I pay attention enough to hear only what I feel I need to hear, then my mind wanders. Or I may filter to avoid hearing certain things—negative, critical, or unpleasant. It's as if the words were never said.

I'm having a really bad week. My PA's mother died, and I wasn't able to get to therapy and my legs...! Her mother died! The poor thing! What have you done to help? Are you going to the funeral?



3. Comparing

When I compare myself to the speaker, I have a hard time listening because I'm trying to see who is smarter, more caring, more competent—me or the other person. I can't let much in because I'm trying to see if I measure up.

It's easy, Mr. Collins. Just click on that button and your text will become bold.

Easy for her to say! She's young, smart and grew up on computers. I just can't get it!



Mr. Collins, I'm worried. My son's really doing badly at law school.

The next thing you know, she's going to be asking me for help. She thinks I'm a softie who will do anything she asks...

4. Mind Reading

Rather than paying attention to what another person is actually saying, I'm trying to figure out what he or she is really thinking or feeling. (Mind readers make assumptions about what people mean and how people react to them, usually based on body language and other nonverbal cues, or their own preoccupying issues.)



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5. Judging

When I judge the person speaking, I dismiss someone based on who they are or what they say. Then I'm not really listening but am having a knee-jerk reaction.

I think she might be sicker than we think. She might have a UTI...

He's thinks he knows so much! He doesn't know what he's talking about.



6. **Dreaming**

I am half listening, and suddenly what the person says triggers a chain of private thoughts. Then my mind wanders, and I don't hear what the person says. I am prone to dreaming when I feel bored or anxious.

She said her PA's making brownies! Brownies!! Oh, I love them! Maybe Tanya will make them for me tomorrow...



7. Identifying

What the person says reminds me of my own experience, so now I'm not listening to them but am thinking about what happened to me. Often I'm just waiting for them to finish so I can tell my own story.

I'm worrying about my PA. She's acting ill at ease and weird, and... I know just what you mean. Sometimes I think Mike's high. He's such a kook. But don't worry, *Mike's* OK.



8. Sparring

When I spar, I am quick to disagree—often listening *only* for points to argue with. This tends to happen when I have strong opinions on a subject.

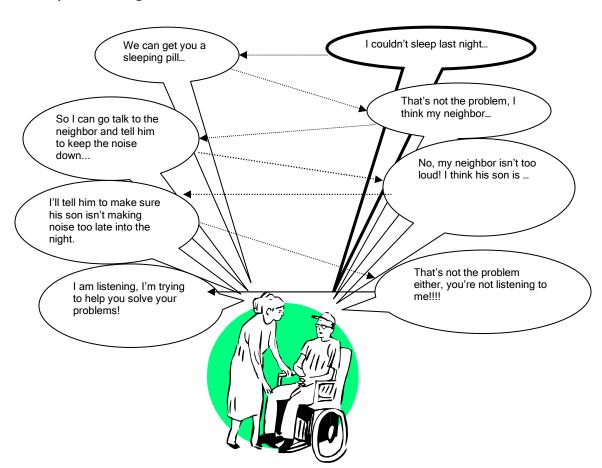
One type of sparring is the put-down, using sarcastic remarks to dismiss another person's point of view. Another is discounting, running myself down when I receive a compliment.

You really supervise your PAs well, Tom. You're patient, but firm. It's good!

No, I'm not. I'm not patient! I get mad at them and act like a jerk.

9. Advising

Before someone has really gotten to what's troubling them, I jump in with suggestions about solving the problem. I am thinking about what to do as they are talking.



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I don't think I'll be able to walk without assistance again. The MS is really kicking in this time.

10. Placating

2.

3.

When I placate, I am nice, pleasant, supportive, but I'm not really listening. I usually agree with what's being said without really taking it in. In this mode, I may also be patronizing. (This listening block is often used with children, ill and older people.)

It's OK, Don't worry. You'll be back on your feet in no time. Just believe in yourself.

Can you think of any other blocks?	
1.	

Identify below your most common listening blocks.

1.	 		

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2	<u>'</u> .			

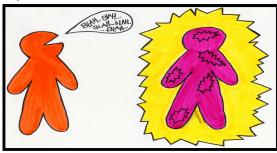
How do these blocks come up for you, especially with PAs and caregivers?

What will help you become aware of when you are using these blocks?

What strategies might you use to get back to really listening when you recognize that your listening is blocked?

Pulling Back

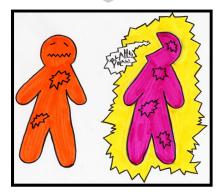
Oftentimes we are faced with situations and people who provoke an emotional response in us—be it **anger**, **hurt**, **frustration**, **hopelessness**, or **sadness**. When we are in an emotional state, listening becomes difficult and communication often becomes charged. Whatever our reaction, we have a **CHOICE** in how we respond:



Choice Point

Option A

Option B

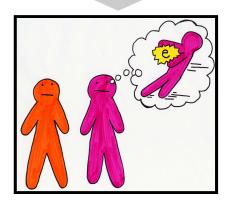


Defend our opinions

Prepare our response

Suspend our opinions and put them on hold

Listen actively, without blocks or judgment



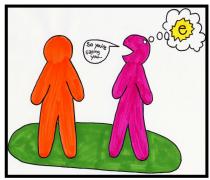


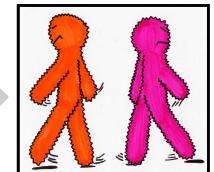
Look for evidence to support our opinions

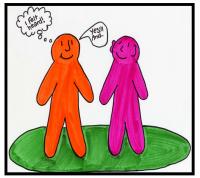
Discount evidence to the contrary

Look with curiosity for new information or insights

Stay open to being changed







Choosing to Pull Back – Which Option?

OPTION A	OPTION B
Generally Leads To:	Generally Leads To:
Difficulty thinking clearly	> Clear thinking
Communications that damage the relationship	More constructive and effective communication
➤ Inability to listen	More empathy for those who think, see, and believe differently
 Difficulty in being open to believing in and trusting the other person 	
> Being judgmental	Having more information, and therefore a better understanding of the whole situation
Feeling justified or self-righteous	of the Whole Studenth
➤ Blaming the other person	Defusing anger
> Holding on to anger, resentment,	Building trust
and mistrust	Problem solving that involves
 Self-fulfilling prophecy—in the future, the person will most likely 	both parties, resulting in mutual ownership of the solution
act in the negative ways we suspect	Self-fulfilling prophecy—in the future, the person will most likely
 Less satisfying relationships and life circumstances 	act in the positive ways we expect
	More satisfying relationships and life circumstances



Self-Awareness Is Key to Pulling Back!



Situations, Behaviors & People that Emotionally Provoke Me	Emotions that Come Up for Me
Ways that I have—and can—pull l	back when I'm provoked:

Analyzing Feedback Effectiveness

"You are so much better than my other PAs."

What was the consumer's intention?	What is a likely impact of saying it?	What are possible outcomes of saying it?

Simple Rules for Giving Feedback

- 1. **Describe the specific behavior** you are giving feedback about...
- 2. **Be direct and clear,** *and,* when giving critical feedback, **use** language that does not blame or judge...
 - ➤ If you can describe the facts and behavior, and not generalize, characterize, or describe the *person*, it helps focus on the issue.
 - ➤ If you avoid giving your opinions, assumptions and judgments, you have a much better chance that the person will hear you.
- 3. **Tell the person how what they are doing makes you feel** (its impact on you)...

Example of Positive Reinforcing Feedback:

"Brenda, I really appreciated that you called last night to make sure that the van would be here at 7:00 to pick me up for my appointment.

Transportation is so frustrating for me! Calling the night before to confirm it lets me get a good night's sleep. I felt taken care of."

Example of Critical Feedback to Change Behavior:

"Brenda, using curse words in my house makes me very uncomfortable. I find swear words upsetting and offensive."

Example of what not to say when giving critical feedback:

"Brenda, your foul language is inexcusable. Ladies don't talk like that!"

4. Give feedback as close as possible to the time of the behavior you want to reinforce or change.



5. Give positive feedback to reinforce good performance often!

A Few More Tips for Giving *Critical* Feedback

1. Make a request of the other person. Invite the person to address the issue with you in a way that will work for both of you. Indicate belief in the person and their ability ...

Example (continuing from above):

> "You are a good person and I really enjoy working with you when you aren't swearing. Some days, you go the whole day without swearing, so I know you can do it! Can you please commit to stop using swear words while you're working with me?"

2. After giving critical feedback . . .

- a. **LISTEN**—Hear the other person's point of view. Actively listen:
 - Pull back, paraphrase and ask open-ended questions



- b. **ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE**—Hold a conversation and listen to each other
 - ➤ Be aware of yourself and your reactions and use pull back strategies
- c. **PLAN FOR ACTION**—Search for solutions that all can agree to
- d. **ACKNOWLEDGE**—Thank the person and acknowledge what you have accomplished together

Note:

Setting up a regular time to sit down and discuss how things are going for you and your PA, such as once every month or two, can be a great way to ensure that you're giving and receiving the feedback you need to maintain a strong, constructive relationship.

Practicing Constructive Feedback

Which Rules Do These Statements Break? What would a constructive & effective feedback statement be?

1.	Event: The PA took her time to show you how to put on makeup.				
	Feedback: You're the best! I don't know what I'd do without you! Broken Rules:				
2.	Event: This PA has a really great talent for cooking authentic, inexpensive Italian food.				
	Feedback: You are so much better than my other PAs.				
	Broken Rules:				
	Effective Statement:				
3.	Event: The PA is mopping the floor without using soap. Feedback: Are you sure you're doing that right? Broken Rules:				
	Effective Statement:				
4.	Event: You feel like you're going to fall each time the PA transfers you. Feedback: <i>I know you can do it. Just do it right next time!</i> Broken Rules:				
	Effective Statement:				

Practicing Constructive Feedback, continued...

5.	Event: PA is talking while you are trying to watch a movie. Feedback: You are driving me nuts. Get out!
	Broken Rules:
	Effective Statement:
6.	Event: The PA was at the Laundromat for 4 hours with 1 laundry load. Feedback: It shouldn't take you that long to do the laundry. Broken Rules:
	Effective Statement:
7.	Event: The PA is calling you "honey" and "baby" instead of using your name. Feedback: You have no idea how much that irritates me. Broken Rules:
	Effective Statement:
8.	Event: The PA puts outfits together in great ways that help you look stylish. Feedback: I love your style. Broken Rules:
	Effective Statement: